United Nations A/68/PV.81

General Assembly
Sixty-eighth session

Official Records

81st plenary meeting
Wednesday, 9 April 2014, 3 p.m.
New York

President: Mr. Ashe ..... (Antigua and Barbuda)

The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.

Agenda item 138 (*continued*)

Scale of assessments for the apportionment of the expenses of the United Nations (A/65/716/Add.8)

The President: I should like, in keeping with established practice, to draw the attention of the General Assembly to document A/68/716/Add.8, in which the Secretary-General informs the President of the General Assembly that, since the issuance of his communication contained in document A/68/716/Add.7, Grenada has made the payment necessary to reduce its arrears below the amount specified in Article 19 of the Charter.

May I take it that the General Assembly duly takes note of the information contained in this document?

It was so decided.

Reports of the Fifth Committee

The President: The General Assembly will now consider the reports of the Fifth Committee on agenda items 132, 134, 139, 140 and 146.

I request the Rapporteur of the Fifth Committee, Mr. Ken Siah of Singapore, to introduce in one intervention the reports of the Fifth Committee that are before the Assembly.

Mr. Siah (Singapore), Rapporteur of the Fifth Committee: I have the honour to present to the General Assembly the reports of the Fifth Committee containing recommendations on issues considered during the first part of the resumed sixty-eighth session of the General Assembly.

The Fifth Committee met from 3 to 28 March and held eight plenary meetings and numerous rounds of informal and informal-informal consultations.

On agenda item 139, "Human resources management", in paragraph 7 of its report, contained in document A/68/690/Add.1, the Committee recommends that the General Assembly adopt a draft resolution, which was adopted by the Committee without a vote.

On agenda item 140, "Joint Inspection Unit", in paragraph 6 of its report contained in document A/68/819, the Committee recommends that the General Assembly adopt a draft resolution, which was adopted by the Committee without a vote.

On agenda item 146, "Financing of the International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals", in paragraph 6 of its report contained in document A/68/683/Add.1, the Committee recommends that the General Assembly adopt a draft resolution, which was adopted by the Committee without a vote.

On agenda item 134, "Proposed programme budget for the biennium 2014-2015", in paragraph 7 of its report contained in document A/68/689/Add.1, the Committee recommends that the General Assembly adopt the draft resolution on special subjects relating to the programme budget for the biennium 2014-2015, which was adopted by the Committee without a vote.

On the same agenda item, the Committee also recommends the adoption of one statement of

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programme budget implications. The relevant report of the Fifth Committee is contained in document A/68/820.

On agenda item 132, entitled "Review of the efficiency of the administrative and financial functioning of the United Nations", the Committee recommends to the General Assembly, in paragraph 10 of its report contained in document A/68/691/Add.1, the adoption of two draft resolutions. Draft resolution I, entitled "Procurement", and draft resolution II, entitled "Progress toward an accountability framework in the United Nations Secretariat", were both adopted by the Committee without a vote.

In paragraph 11 of the same report, the Committee recommends that the General Assembly adopt a draft decision on questions deferred for future consideration, which was adopted by the Committee without a vote.

I thank delegations for their cooperation during negotiations and assure them that the actions taken during the 34th formal meeting of the Fifth Committee are reflected in the reports before them.

The President: If there is no proposal under rule 66 of the rules of procedure, I shall take it that the General Assembly decides not to discuss the reports of the Fifth Committee that are before the Assembly today.

It was so decided.

The President: Statements will therefore be limited to explanations of vote or position.

The positions of delegations regarding the recommendations of the Fifth Committee have been made clear in the Committee and are reflected in the relevant official records. May I remind members that, under paragraph 7 of decision 34/401, the General Assembly agreed that

> "When the same draft resolution is considered in a Main Committee and in plenary meeting, a delegation should, as far as possible, explain its vote only once, i.e., either in the Committee or in plenary meeting, unless that delegation's vote in plenary meeting is different from its vote in the Committee."

May I remind delegations that, also in accordance with decision 34/401, explanations of vote are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Before we begin to take action on the recommendations contained in the reports of the Fifth Committee, I should like to advise representatives that we are going to proceed to take decisions in the same manner as was done in the Fifth Committee, unless notified otherwise in advance.

Agenda item 132 (*continued*)

Review of the efficiency of the administrative and financial functioning of the United Nations

Report of the Fifth Committee (A/68/691/Add.1)

The President: The Assembly has before it two draft resolutions recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 10 of its report and a draft decision recommended in paragraph 11 of the same report.

The Assembly will now take decisions on draft resolutions I and II and on the draft decision.

The Assembly will first take a decision on draft resolution I, entitled "Procurement". The Fifth Committee adopted it without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

Draft resolution I was adopted (resolution 68/263).

The President: Draft resolution II is entitled "Progress toward an accountability system in the United Nations Secretariat". The Fifth Committee adopted it without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

Draft resolution II was adopted (resolution 68/264).

The President: The Assembly will now take action on the draft decision, entitled "Questions deferred for future consideration". The Fifth Committee adopted the draft decision without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

The draft decision was adopted (decision 68/549 B).

The President: The Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 132.

Agenda item 134 (*continued*)

Proposed programme budget for the biennium 2014-2015

Report of the Fifth Committee (A/68/689/Add.1)

The President: The Assembly has before it a draft resolution recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 7 of its report. We will now take a decision on

the draft resolution, entitled "Special subjects relating to the programme budget for the biennium 2014-2015". The Fifth Committee adopted the draft resolution without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 68/247 B).

The President: I shall now give the floor to representatives who wish to speak in explanation of vote or position.

Mr. Tuy (Cambodia): On behalf of the Royal Government of Cambodia, I would like to express Cambodia's view on the subvention to the Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia (ECCC), under agenda item 134.

First of all, I would like to extend our sincere gratitude to the Secretary-General for his appeal to the international community in September 2013 to assist Cambodia in a timely manner to resolve the financial crisis of the ECCC.

Following the report of the Secretary-General (A/68/532), entitled "Request for a subvention to the Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia", dated 16 October 2013, a draft resolution was introduced in the Fifth Committee based on the recommendation of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions.

The Royal Government of Cambodia is of the view that investigations and trials of senior leaders of the Khmer Rouge regime and those believed to be most responsible for grave crimes are a key demand of victims of human rights abuses. The prosecution of such criminals can play a key role in restoring justice and bringing dignity to the victims, help strengthen the rule of law and send a strong signal that such crimes will not be tolerated in human society.

The Royal Government of Cambodia notes the efforts of the Group of 77, which has taken into consideration the needs of the national component of the ECCC.

In 2014, the Royal Government of Cambodia provided its customary $1.7 million for the Court's running costs, plus an additional $1.1 million to cover the salaries of ECCC national personnel, including judicial officers, for the first quarter, for an aggregate of $2.8 million, which represents more than 40 per cent of the $6.4 million estimated budget for the national component. In total, since the establishment of the ECCC in 2006, the Royal Government has provided over $20 million, more than $10 million in cash and $10 million in kind.

In the spirit of collaboration, the Royal Government of Cambodia welcomes the Fifth Committee's endorsement of a subvention to the ECCC from United Nations assessed contributions. According to the Joint Statement by the Royal Government of Cambodia and the United Nations High-level Delegation regarding the Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia, dated 28 January 2014, the United Nations High-level Delegation agreed that Ambassador David Scheffer, the Secretary-General's Special Expert, would devote maximum efforts, working with representatives of the Royal Government of Cambodia, to mobilizing further funds towards the 2014 budget of the national component of the ECCC. The Royal Government encourages all Member States to provide further voluntary contributions to both the national and international components of the ECCC. The Royal Government of Cambodia welcomes the endorsement of the new budget by the group of interested States and strongly appeals to the donor community to provide the financial support that the ECCC needs.

In conclusion, I wish to reiterate that the Royal Government of Cambodia remains firmly committed to ending impunity for the atrocities that the Cambodian people endured under the Khmer Rouge regime. We reaffirm our continuing commitment to working closely with the United Nations and all stakeholders to ensure that the Extraordinary Chambers of in the Courts of Cambodia successfully fulfil their mandate in a lasting manner and achieve their goals.

Mr. Sánchez Azcuy (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): I would first like to say how pleased my delegation is to see you presiding over our work once again, Mr. President, and to ask you to convey our greetings to the Secretary-General.

The following statement expresses the position of Cuba's delegation on the report of the Fifth Committee on agenda item 134, "Proposed programme budget for the biennium 2014-2015" (A/68/689/Add.1). Cuba would like to make a statement on its position regarding resolution 68/247 B, "Special subjects relating to the programme budget for the biennium 2014-2015", particularly section VII, on the Capital master plan.

Cuba deplores the adoption of paragraph 13 of the resolution, whereby the Secretary-General is authorized to use funds from the 2014-2015 Working Capital Fund and the Special Account to cover the $155 million deficit from the capital master plan. As we know, the deficit is the result of an escalation of costs associated with the capital master plan and of inadequate legislative action on the part of Member States, which were not able to resolve this issue at the appropriate time. Although it is true that the paragraph contains a safeguard that this is to be done on an exceptional basis and will not set a precedent, the decision still nonetheless violates paragraph 5 of resolution 68/250, "Working Capital Fund for the biennium 2014-2015", which specifies what the Fund may be used for. The Fund totals only $150 million, which is not enough to cover the deficit.

There is a precise procedure for using the Working Capital Fund and the Special Account, which Member States have confirmed at every budget biennium. In fact, we have just done exactly that in the main session of the Fifth Committee. This is the second time, however, that the procedure has been violated during the Assembly's sixty-eighth session. It endangers the Organization's financial stability and its ability to meet unforeseen expenses. Cuba considers that it is the responsibility of Member States not to allow safeguards to become established practice or to create negative precedents in that regard.

The President: We have heard the last speaker in explanation of vote after the vote. The Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 134.

Agenda item 139 (*continued*)

Human resources management

Report of the Fifth Committee (A/68/690/Add.1)

The President: The Assembly has before it a draft resolution recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 7 of its report. We will now take a decision on the draft resolution, entitled "Mobility framework". The Fifth Committee adopted it without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do likewise?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 68/265).

The President: I now give the floor to the Secretary-General, His Excellency Mr. Ban Ki-moon.

The Secretary-General: Let me start by expressing my appreciation to the Assembly for the many important decisions to be taken this afternoon following the latest round of discussions about the future of our Organization. Those decisions will contribute to further strengthening the global, effective, efficient and focused United Nations that we have been building together over the past several years.

I especially want to recognize the Assembly's adoption just now of my proposal for a career development and mobility framework for staff (resolution 68/265). I thank all representatives here, and the many other officials who have contributed to this accomplishment. I am grateful for the Assembly's constructive engagement and support, and would like to congratulate Members on the visionary decision they have made. Establishing a managed mobility framework is a historic development for the United Nations. Mobility will allow us to manage our most precious resource — our staff — far more strategically than we do today. As we implement the framework, we can better deliver worldwide on the mandates the Assembly entrusts to the United Nations.

Today's result is part of a broader strategy for building a modern and truly global Secretariat that is more flexible and responsive to the many pressing demands on the international agenda. To achieve that, we have continued to modernize our business practices over the past several years, including through transformational initiatives such as Inspira, Umoja and the International Public Sector Accounting Standards. With respect to human resources reform, we have continuously evolved, starting in 2009 with the General Assembly decision on streamlining contracts and harmonizing conditions of service.

Today, with the adoption of a managed mobility framework, the General Assembly has paved the way for the United Nations and its staff to take a significant step towards fulfilling our common vision of a truly global, dynamic and adaptable workforce. With a structured approach to mobility, we can be much more strategic in deploying staff worldwide in order to fulfil our mission globally. The framework will enable staff to enjoy more rewarding careers as well-rounded and multi-skilled individuals. In the process, they will gain the ability to better meet the diverse needs of the Organization. The framework will also enable us to more effectively share the burden of service in the most difficult duty stations.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank staff representatives for their contributions and input

during the process leading to the proposal that has now been approved. It has not always been easy, but over time we worked hard together to devise a feasible plan with tremendous potential for benefiting both the Organization and its staff. I know there may be concerns among some staff about the impact of this new framework; that is only natural. But I am confident that once it has been implemented, all staff will recognize the benefits of mobility for building their careers, broadening their horizons and gaining diverse perspectives that will be a great asset throughout their professional lives.

That is a big part of what the mobility initiative is all about. The process that led to today's success was transparent, open and based on dialogue. We will maintain that constructive approach as we prepare to launch the new framework in 2016. Until then, we will be in a transitional, preparatory period. As we move forward, I will strive to make sure that the concerns and wishes of Member States are fully addressed.

Today, the Assembly will take a number of other important decisions that will strengthen our overall transformational strategy. I will not review each of them but let me highlight a few. I appreciate the key support of the Assembly for my continued efforts to strengthen accountability in the Organization and in particular Member States' encouragement with regard to results-based management and enterprise risk management. I am fully committed to both those initiatives. I also commend the Assembly's decisions to add resources to strengthen the very important human rights treaty system. I thank the Assembly for recognizing the need to fund the budget shortfalls in the capital master plan. I look forward to Member States' decision on a final appropriation during the main part of the sixty-ninth session.

At the same time, I recognize that there is still no agreement on the proposed United Nations Partnerships Facility and that important questions still have to be addressed. We must acknowledge that partnership is happening, is growing and is a fact. That is even truer today than it was when I first called for adequate United Nations capacity to engage in partnerships more than two years ago. The goal of the proposal for the Partnership Facility is to strengthen the United Nation's capacity to bring greater accountability, coherence, efficiency and scale to United Nations partnership activities.

With fewer than 700 days left to accelerate progress on the Millennium Development Goals and with a post-2015 development agenda on the horizon, it is imperative that we match our ambitions with concrete ways to achieve them. Harnessing the strength of the partnerships, including with private sector, civil society and philanthropic organizations, will help the United Nations to deliver on Member States' priorities and mandates. That is why I look forward to continuing our discussions on that proposal and to achieving an agreement that allows the United Nations to harness the strengths of external partners and to take a coherent and accountable approach to partnerships.

From my earliest days in office back in January 2007, I made a pledge to bring greater transparency, accountability, efficiency and mobility to the United Nations. Those goals are shared by Member States and our staff, who serve each day with dedication, many under difficult and dangerous conditions. I thank Members for the progress that we have achieved so far. The decisions that the Assembly has taken are fundamental to the ability of the United Nations to adapt to the changing global landscape. Let us take the successes that we have achieved here as a sign of our power to reach consensus on key issues, and let us tackle the challenges ahead with even greater faith in our collective ability to strengthen the United Nations. I thank Members for their leadership and commitment.

The President: I thank the Secretary-General for his statement.

I now give the floor to the observer of the European Union to make a statement following the adoption.

Mr. Mayr-Harting (European Union): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the States members of the European Union. We are very glad to have the Secretary-General with us today as we take a decision on something that is also so important to him.

The candidate countries Turkey, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia; the countries of the Stabilization and Association Process and potential candidates Albania and Bosnia and Herzegovina; as well as Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova and Georgia align themselves with this statement.

The States members of the European Union have long been staunch supporters of human resources management reform and the principle of managed

mobility. We fully support the aim of making the work of the United Nations more effective and efficient by implementing a modern human resources system and by fostering an organizational culture that enables staff at all levels to contribute to their greatest potential.

The mobility framework should be seen in that overall context. We therefore welcome the agreement on the Secretary-General's refined managed mobility framework. We believe that the new mobility framework has an important contribution to make to improve the ability of the Organization to deliver on its mandates by enhancing the skills and experience of its staff, who are the Organization's greatest asset, as we have so often affirmed. We also welcome the constructive engagement of all partners and the thorough deliberations that we have been able to have on that important issue. Now it is time to implement the framework. We look forward to realizing the opportunities that mobility will bring, to the benefit of the Organization and all the staff.

The President: The Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 139.

Agenda item 140

Joint Inspection Unit

Report of the Fifth Committee (A/68/819)

The President: The Assembly has before it a draft resolution recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 6 of its report. We will now take a decision on the draft resolution. The Fifth Committee adopted it without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do likewise?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 68/266).

The President: The Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 140.

Agenda item 146 (*continued*)

Financing of the International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals

Report of the Fifth Committee (A/68/683/Add.1)

The President: The Assembly has before it a draft resolution recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 6 of its report. The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft resolution, entitled "Construction of a new facility for the International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals, Arusha branch". The Fifth Committee adopted the draft resolution without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do likewise?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 68/267).

The President: The Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 146.

The General Assembly has thus concluded its consideration of all the reports of the Fifth Committee before it.

Agenda item 116 (*continued*)

Appointments to fill vacancies in subsidiary organs and other appointments

(g) Appointment of members of the Committee on Conferences

Note by the Secretary-General (A/68/91)

The President: Members will recall that at its 60th plenary meeting, on 5 December 2013, the Assembly took note of the appointments of Denmark, Japan, Mauritania, Qatar, the United Republic of Tanzania and the United States of America as members of the Committee on Conferences for a period of three years, beginning on 1 January 2014.

Members will also recall that the Assembly took note of the appointments of Jamaica as a member of the Committee on Conferences for a term of office beginning on 10 February 2014 and ending 31 December 2016 and Uruguay as a member of the Committee on Conferences for a term of office beginning on 7 March 2014 and ending on 31 December 2015, at its 74th and 75th plenary meetings on 10 February and 7 March 2014, respectively.

Members will further recall that there remained one vacant seat from the Latin American and Caribbean States for a term beginning on the date of appointment and ending on 31 December 2014.

On the recommendation of the Chair of the Latin American and Caribbean States, I have appointed Paraguay as a member of the Committee on Conferences for a term of office beginning on 9 April 2014 and ending on 31 December 2014.

May I take it that the Assembly takes note of that appointment?

It was so decided.

The President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of sub-item (g) of agenda item 116?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 125 (*continued*)

United Nations reform: measures and proposals

Draft resolution (A/68/L.37)

Report of the Fifth Committee (A/68/820)

The President: Members will recall that under agenda item 125, the Assembly adopted resolution 68/2 at its 2nd plenary meeting, on 20 September 2013. Members will further recall that the Assembly held a debate on agenda item 125, jointly with agenda items 14 and 118, at its 54th plenary meeting on 20 November 2013.

We shall now proceed to consider draft resolution A/68/L.37, entitled "Strengthening and enhancing the effective functioning of the human rights treaty body system".

I now call on the facilitators of draft resolution A/68/L.37.

Ms. Gunnarsdóttir (Iceland): I am making this statement on behalf of the facilitators of the intergovernmental process on strengthening and enhancing the effective functioning of the human rights treaty body system, Iceland and Tunisia.

The Secretary-General has said,

> "The United Nations human rights treaty body system, which combines noble ideals with practical measures to realize them, is one of the greatest achievements in the history of the global struggle for human rights. The treaty bodies stand at the heart of the international human rights protection system." (*A/66/860, p. 7*)

With that in mind, it has been very clear to us from the beginning how important it would be to successfully conclude the process with consensus among all Member States. We believe that by adopting draft resolution A/68/L.37 before us, we will indeed be strengthening and enhancing the system, as the draft resolution carries significant changes and recommendations for improving the treaty body system.

It offers recommendations on how to improve the reporting process through such measures as lists of issues prior to reporting, common core documents, interactive dialogue and concluding observations. It strengthens the visibility and accessibility of the treaty bodies through videoconferencing and webcasting and other measures. It reinforces the importance of the election process and the quality of the experts. It puts in place efficiency measures that reduce the cost per week of meeting time — for some treaty bodies, close to half a million dollars, or an increased cost efficiency of up to 45 per cent. It reinforces the importance of the independence of the treaty bodies and its members. It provides for an evidence-based, realistic and justifiable allocation of meeting time for the treaty bodies and, based on that model, allocates around 20 additional weeks of meeting time, which is close to a 30 per cent increase. Finally, the draft resolution provides for a significantly strengthened capacity-building component.

Those are measurable achievements.

Mr. Khiari (Tunisia): Allow me to continue on behalf of the facilitators of the intergovernmental process.

The discussions that took place among Member States and other stakeholders during the process also led to increased knowledge among Member States here in New York of the complex human rights treaty body system, and the dialogue among stakeholders has been a healthy exercise in itself. Allow me in that context to express the heartfelt appreciation of the facilitators for the contributions of Member States to the process. Although the negotiations were not easy, they clearly demonstrated our common goal of strengthening and enhancing the effective functioning of the human rights treaty body system.

During the process, the facilitators also benefitted from the expertise and experience of a number of treaty body members and had the opportunity to meet with most of the committees and chairpersons of the treaty bodies on a number of occasions. Those interactions have been invaluable, and we would like to thank our interlocutors for sharing their valuable experience with us. Similarly, the facilitators have had a number of meetings with civil society and national human rights institutions and benefitted from their perspective on how to strengthen the treaty body system. We are grateful for their contribution. We would also like to mention the contribution and support provided to the intergovernmental process by the High Commissioner

for Human Rights and her Office. We are thankful for their tireless efforts in support of the treaty body system.

Last but not least, I would like to pay tribute to my predecessor, Ambassador Desra Percaya, Permanent Representative of Indonesia, for his efforts and valuable contribution to the present successful outcome.

It is clear that strengthening and enhancing the effective functioning of the human rights treaty bodies is an ongoing process. It is our hope that through the intergovernmental process the responsibility and accountability of each of the stakeholders has been strengthened through the draft resolution before us (A/68/L.37). But our obligation towards the system does not end there. After the draft resolution's adoption, the focus has to be on its implementation and, at the end of the day, our success will be measured by its impact on the ground.

The President: The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/68/L.37, entitled "Strengthening and enhancing the effective functioning of the human rights treaty body system". May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/68/L.37?

Draft resolution A/68/L.37 was adopted (resolution 68/268).

The President: I now call on those representatives who wish to make statements following the adoption of resolution 68/268.

I give the floor to the observer of the European Union.

Mr. Mayr-Harting (European Union): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union and its member States. The candidate countries Turkey, Montenegro and Serbia; the countries of the Stabilization and Association Process and potential candidates Albania and Bosnia and Herzegovina; as well as Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova, Armenia and Georgia align themselves with this statement.

I am taking the floor in connection with the adoption of resolution 68/268 on strengthening and enhancing the effective functioning of the human rights treaty body system.

Today marks an important and overdue step in strengthening and enhancing the effective functioning of the human rights treaty body system. We believe that the resolution adopted by the General Assembly just now as a result of a long and thorough process of discussions is of immediate and direct importance to the international human rights protection system. The human rights treaty bodies stand at the heart of the system and are fundamental in the translation of universal human rights norms into practical measures for their realization for all rights holders. Therefore, their sustainability, effectiveness and efficiency are key to all efforts to promote and protect human rights.

It is for that reason that the European Union has engaged actively, including through concrete proposals, in the General Assembly's discussions over the past two and a half years. It has been our consistent position that the outcome of that process must strengthen the capacity of the treaty bodies to address the increased number of ratifications and the reports and individual communications submitted to them in a more timely and effective manner, and place the treaty body system on a sustainable footing. We have also underlined that it must lead to a higher level of compliance by the States parties with their reporting obligations and better implementation of the concluding observations.

We note that the final text before us is a compromise that aims to take into account the different views of all delegations, but is based on a goal shared by all Member States to address the urgent challenges faced by the treaty bodies and on the confirmation of their unique monitoring role, as outlined in the international human rights treaties. It also reflects the shared understanding that only a balanced solution that addresses cost savings, efficiency, additional meeting time on the basis of estimated burden of work and capacity-building can provide a credible step towards a strengthened human rights treaty body system. Moreover, only in that way can it do justice to the extensive multi-stakeholder consultations, led by the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, which provided the basis for the Assembly's deliberations.

Let me again underline the potential practical contribution our decision today can make to enhancing the human rights treaty body system. While we welcome the adoption of resolution 68/268, we emphasize the paramount importance of its implementation by all stakeholders. We continued to encourage throughout the discussions all steps by various stakeholders, including the treaty bodies, to strengthen and enhance their methods of work and trust that the resolution adopted today will further facilitate those efforts. We

also take note of the invitation by the General Assembly to the human rights treaty bodies and the Office of the High Commissioner to continue to work to increase coordination and predictability in the reporting process.

In that regard, I would emphasize a crucial position of the European Union, expressed throughout the process and relevant to the implementation of the resolution just adopted — respect for the competences and independence of various stakeholders, including the treaty bodies, as set out in the human rights treaties and reaffirmed by the General Assembly in the resolution. It is with that key consideration in mind that the European Union understands resolution 68/268.

We note the intense and in-depth General Assembly discussions over its past three sessions, which helped identify a consensus solution among all delegations. We thank the co-facilitators — the Permanent Representative of Iceland, Ambassador Gréta Gunnarsdóttir, and the Permanent Representative of Tunisia, Ambassador Mohamed Khiari — the Permanent Representative of Indonesia, Ambassador Desra Percaya, and their teams for their dedication, patience and tireless efforts in reaching that goal. We also thank all delegations for their close cooperation and engagement in that process. We welcome the expertise provided by all stakeholders, including the treaty body experts, and the support of the High Commissioner and her Office in attaining the outcome we have adopted today.

The human rights treaty bodies are a vital part of our joint efforts to promote and protect human rights, as underlined by the increasing and, in some cases, near universal ratification of the international human rights treaties. It is our strong belief that the adoption of resolution 68/268 today will promote steps by all stakeholders — treaty bodies, States parties, the Office of the High Commissioner, national human rights institutions and civil society — towards a stronger, more efficient and effective treaty body system. We will continue to pay close attention to the impact of the resolution as it is implemented in the coming years, with the expectation that what we are adopting today will have a real and positive impact in promoting and protecting human rights and fundamental freedoms for all.

Mr. Kyaw Tin (Myanmar): I have the great pleasure to speak on this pertinent issue on behalf of the States members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN): Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Viet Nam.

Allow me to express ASEAN's utmost appreciation and warmest congratulations to the co-facilitators, the Permanent Representatives of Iceland and Tunisia, in diligently steering the consultations that have led to the successful conclusion of the intergovernmental process. I would also like to thank the Permanent Representative of Indonesia, the previous co-facilitator, for his unwavering efforts.

ASEAN actively and constructively participated in the consultations in order to achieve a substantive, meaningful and balanced document that would strengthen the treaty body system. ASEAN appreciates the concrete steps made by the co-facilitators in addressing our concerns and including our proposals in the text. During the negotiation process, ASEAN highlighted five issues that are of key importance to us. Allow me to reiterate ASEAN's positions with regard to the process.

First, on ensuring the quality and efficiency of the system, ASEAN had given its strong support to the proposals in resolution 68/268 towards that end, including a simplified reporting procedure, the submission of a common core document, word limits on the number of questions and on States parties' reports, which was included in paragraph 15. We emphasize that all measures to improve the quality and efficiency of the system must be applied in an objective and non-biased manner for all relevant stakeholders, including civil society organizations.

Secondly, with respect to ensuring the financial sustainability of the system, ASEAN had supported the proposal for increased meeting time contained in paragraph 26 and hopes that that will address the problem of the persistent backlog. We encourage the treaty body experts to continue to improve effectiveness by considering at least 2.5 reports per week and, where relevant, at least five reports under the optional protocols. We emphasize that the additional margin in paragraph 26 (c) should be allocated among the Committees, on the basis of their expected workload in addressing the backlog. Furthermore, while we are in favour of cost-saving measures, we underscore the importance of and need for summary records for the dialogue of human rights treaty bodies with States parties to be issued, as stated in paragraph 24. We

stress that webcasting shall not in any way replace the issuance of such records.

Thirdly, in regard to increasing the capacity-building capabilities of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), ASEAN is supportive of the capacity-building proposals contained in paragraphs 17 to 19, which we hope will greatly benefit States parties in assisting them to fulfil their treaty obligations. Such assistance should be undertaken upon request, in consultation with and with the consent of the State concerned and in accordance with the principle of national ownership. Those principles are reflected in the fifteenth preambular paragraph and paragraphs 17 and 19.

ASEAN is of the view that those paragraphs should always be considered together and should serve as guideposts for the terms of reference relating to the work of any potential capacity-building officer in OHCHR regional offices to ensure adherence to that mandate. Capacity-building activities, in the form of trilateral cooperation with regional organizations, will contribute to strengthening regional human rights bodies, such as the ASEAN Intergovernmental Commission on Human Rights and the ASEAN Commission on the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Women and Children, when the same principles apply.

Fourthly, with regard to enhancing and strengthening the communication and interaction between treaty bodies and States parties, it is important that the resolution recognizes States parties as key stakeholders of the treaty body system and preserves the principle of cooperation and genuine dialogue. In that regard, we are of the view that the existing good practice of sharing the list of questions with States parties a few days before the dialogue between States parties and treaty bodies should continue. We are supportive of the inclusion of paragraph 39 on the annual meetings of the Chairs of the treaty bodies with States parties to all human rights treaties, held in Geneva and New York, with a view to ensuring a forum for an open and formal interactive dialogue. We believe that to be an effective approach to increase interaction and to improve the channels of communication between both parties.

Fifthly, with respect to maintaining the independence, professionalism and accountability of members of the human rights treaty bodies, we strongly believe that the independence, impartiality and credibility of members of the treaty bodies are essential for the discharge of their mandates. ASEAN is therefore pleased to note that the Chairs of the human rights treaty bodies adopted the Addis Ababa guidelines in 2012. However, ASEAN remains concerned that some treaty bodies have not implemented those guidelines. We encourage them to do so. We are pleased that paragraph 37 encourages the treaty bodies to seek the views of States parties, the key stakeholders, in reviewing the guidelines, which we believe will serve only to improve them.

Furthermore, ASEAN underscores that it is important that the composition of treaty bodies give due consideration, among other issues, to equitable geographical distribution, balanced gender representation, professional background and representation of different legal systems. It is also important that the members nominated to serve on the treaty bodies serve in their personal capacity, be of high moral character, integrity and acknowledged impartiality and possess competence in the field of human rights.

In the spirit of strengthening and enhancing the effective functioning of the human rights treaty body system, we look forward to the implementation of the resolution and reaffirm ASEAN's full support and constructive role in that regard. We would be grateful if this statement could be recorded in full in the official records of the session.

Mr. Zehnder (Switzerland) (*spoke in French*): Switzerland thanks the Permanent Representatives of Iceland and Tunisia as co-facilitators, and the Permanent Representative of Indonesia and their teams for their tireless efforts and perseverance, which have allowed us to successfully conclude the process.

From the beginning of the inclusive consultations process on strengthening the human rights treaty body system, launched by the High Commissioner for Human Rights in Geneva in 2009, and then continued here at the General Assembly, Switzerland has always actively engaged with other States in order to, first, seek pragmatic solutions to improve the system's effectiveness and successfully to overcome the challenges with regard to current and future capacity; secondly, defend the independence and expertise of members of the treaty bodies, which are at the heart of the United Nations human rights protection system; and thirdly, include the views of all stakeholders concerned. These include States, of course, but also the treaty bodies themselves, the High Commissioner for

Human Rights, national human rights institutions and civil society.

Our assessment of the end of that long process is that the outcome is positive. However, it is useful to recall that resolution 68/268, which we have just adopted, is only the beginning of the new process of its implementation. The resolution is a solid foundation, to which all actors concerned should be fully committed in order to truly contribute to improving the system's effectiveness and efficiency. Two aspects should be underscored in that regard. First, it is the primary responsibility of treaty bodies themselves to establish efficient working methods. Secondly, it is our responsibility as States to show more discipline in order to submit our reports in time and to improve our cooperation with the treaty bodies.

In conclusion, the Assembly can rest assured that Switzerland will continue to actively work for the implementation of the resolution and, in general, for the institutional and financial strengthening of the human rights pillar within the United Nations.

Mr. Zagaynov (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the cross-regional group, which includes Belarus, Bolivia, China, Cuba, Iran, Nicaragua, Pakistan, Syria, Venezuela and my own country, the Russian Federation.

We decided to join the consensus on resolution 68/268, entitled "Strengthening and enhancing the effective functioning of the human rights treaty body system". We would like to express our gratitude to the co-facilitators — the Permanent Representatives of Iceland and Tunisia — as well as Indonesia for their leadership throughout the entire intergovernmental process.

The functioning of the human rights treaty bodies is one of the cornerstones of the universal international system for the promotion and protection of human rights. Its genuine improvement was one of the principle goals of the cross-regional group throughout the negotiation process, which lasted more than two years. Numerous meetings in the context of the intergovernmental process clearly indicated that the treaty body system was in serious crisis and that the extent of the problems in its functioning was deeper and more complex than it seemed at the outset.

During the intergovernmental process, the cross-regional group was engaged in a constructive dialogue with other States on a broad range of issues related to the functioning of the treaty bodies. Despite the fact that not all our proposals were reflected in the final document, we believe the current resolution to be a basis for further strengthening the treaty body system and improving its functioning.

It is now crucial for all stakeholders, in particular the treaty bodies themselves, to ensure the prompt and full implementation of the resolution. For example, States parties should prepare short and concise national reports. The treaty bodies and their experts, as well as the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, must demonstrate true impartiality, objectivity and independence. We also hope that the resolution's various provisions on the consideration of periodic reports and individual communications will not be used for hollow or groundless requests for additional funding and human resources.

At the same time, the United Nations system as a whole should be able to ensure the effective functioning of the treaty body system, bearing in mind the fundamental principles of the United Nations, such as multilingualism. We therefore expect that all requests from States parties regarding the use of the six official languages of the United Nations, as provided for in the resolution, will be met accordingly and in a timely manner.

During the in-depth intergovernmental process, a decision was also reached on the financial aspects of the functioning of the treaty body system. Bearing in mind the resolution's positions, in future we will not support the practice whereby treaty bodies ask for additional funding during Third Committee sessions.

The resolution stipulates that we have to examine the state of the treaty body system within six years in order to review the measures' effectiveness. Until then, we will continue to discuss various issues relating to the system's functioning at meetings and conferences of the relevant States parties and other forums.

Mr. Wenaweser (Liechtenstein): Liechtenstein has been a long-standing supporter of a strong and independent treaty body system, and we consider the human rights system one of the main pillars of the United Nations. We have therefore participated actively in the process of strengthening the treaty bodies that has just reached a conclusion with the adoption of a comprehensive reform package. We consider the text to be a very significant achievement that will help to safeguard the system at a time when it has been

threatened with collapse, and will continue to guarantee its effective functioning.

The adoption of resolution 68/268 today is a clear reaffirmation of the importance that States continue to attach to the work of the treaty bodies. I would like to thank and congratulate the co-facilitators, the Permanent Representatives of Iceland and Tunisia, as well as the Permanent Representative of Indonesia, for their outstanding leadership in conducting the negotiations. We would also like to thank the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights for its invaluable support in arriving at this far-reaching decision.

The reforms we have just adopted will ensure the proper working and functioning of the system at a time of an ever-increasing number of treaty ratifications and States' reports. The reforms achieve a balance between greater efficiency and sustainable funding for the system. In that regard, we welcome the decision to provide additional meeting time, as well as simplified reporting procedures. We trust that the increased capacity available within the Office of the High Commissioner to assist States in meeting their reporting obligations will make a significant contribution to addressing the problem of non-reporting, which has plagued the system for such a long time. We are also pleased that the reforms stipulate that any savings realized as a result of the measures laid down will be allocated to the work of treaty bodies.

This reform could be a very important decision in directing the system towards its core purpose — an opportunity for national debate, a tool for regular policy review and a platform for dialogue with individuals of outstanding expertise and qualifications. Throughout the process, we have underlined the importance of respecting the independence of treaty bodies. We are satisfied that the reform package has largely followed that principle and has refrained from measures that would have unduly interfered with the independence of those expert bodies.

The Addis Ababa guidelines demonstrate the treaty bodies' ability to strengthen their own methods of work and safeguard their independence. We trust that they will continue their efforts in this regard, particularly in order to maximize the efficiency and benefits of the dialogues with States. We will continue to support efforts aimed at improving the election procedures and ensuring that the best-qualified individuals are nominated and elected to serve on treaty bodies.

Finally, we welcome the inclusion of a review clause in the reform package. One lesson we have learned from this process is that we definitely let too much time pass before agreeing on the measures just adopted. We will certainly have to continue monitoring developments in the system and be ready to make adjustments as needed.

Mr. Ruidiaz (Chile) (*spoke in Spanish*): I have the honour to speak at this meeting on behalf of the delegations of Argentina, Colombia, Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guatemala, Mexico, Panama, Peru, Uruguay and my own country, Chile. As the group of like-minded Latin American countries, we participated throughout the entire intergovernmental process of strengthening and improving the efficient functioning of the human rights treaty body system, the final result of which was adopted today by the General Assembly (resolution 68/258).

This has been a long, complex and sometimes difficult process, directly affecting the effective promotion and protection of human rights worldwide. The treaty bodies, and their ability to effectively monitor compliance with the major human rights instruments, were dealing with a critical situation that seriously undermined their capacity to fulfil the functions assigned to them by States and thereby threatened a fundamental component of the multilateral system protecting human rights. We believe that today the General Assembly has produced an effective response to that challenge.

The like-minded Latin American countries welcome the adoption of the resolution's provisions, which, while certainly reflecting the delicate balance achieved between the various policy positions, also form the basis for effective improvement of the treaty bodies' work, thanks to a happy meeting of minds, of savings pursued and resources committed in a constructive consensus whose ultimate goal is to better protect the human rights with whose protection the committees are entrusted.

The formula agreed on also respects the autonomy and independence essential to the committees' work, according to their respective conventions, and ensures their ability to work objectively and impartially, without forgettng that it also includes the necessary mechanisms for updating and evaluating proposed measures in a system that, like everything, can be improved, including a review of the committees' status and the measures' effectiveness six years after this adoption.

We owe the satisfactory result achieved to the many people who have played a leading and nurturing role in the process. In that regard, we would like to express our special appreciation to the co-facilitators, Ambassador Gréta Gunnarsdóttir of Iceland, Ambassador Desra Percaya of Indonesia and Ambassador Mohamed Khaled Khiari of Tunisia, and the experts who assisted them — Messrs. Vardi, Arief, Nona, Diana. Amira and Nur — for their tireless dedication, commitment, intelligence and openness, which in February finally enabled us to come up with the basic elements of an agreement, a goal that to many seemed utopian.

The various players involved over the past three years brought different perspectives and concerns to the table, a reflection of the varied and multiple realities in which they function and which must be familiar to the committees themselves. In that regard, we would also like to express our gratitude for the driving role played by the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Ms. Navi Pillay, who, even before the formal start of the intergovernmental process, encouraged reflection on how to improve the functioning of the committees established pursuant to the human rights treaties. She was concerned that we address the serious situation the committees found themselves in and made the decision to conduct broad consultations with all the relevant actors whose functions qualified them to participate in the discussion: States, the committees and their experts, civil society, national human rights institutions, academics and non-governmental organizations, whose indispensable contributions enriched the ideas and documents that were examined during the debates of the intergovernmental process.

We would like to briefly summarize the main elements in the resolution that our group championed continuously and that encouraged us to believe that it would contribute effectively to strengthening the committees' functioning in a realistic, comprehensive and sustainable manner. Regarding practical measures for improving efficiency, we would like to highlight the additional working time allowed committees and calculated on a sustainable basis, including the allocation of sufficient financial and human resources for the Subcommittee on Prevention of Torture and its mission to carry out field visits; the push for simplified reporting procedures; and the submission by States of common core documents and updating them, among other measures.

Concerning measures to improve cooperation between the various actors, we would like to cite the resources allocated to essential capacity-building for States and the role to be played by the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and its regional offices, and by United Nations country teams and agencies, as well as the increased accessibility measures, to cite only a few. Measures that will help to improve the coordination and predictability of the committees' work include further efforts to harmonize and align the committees' working methods, their dialogue with States and their formulation of concrete, focused observations in their comments and general feedback.

Finally, with regard to the measures to strengthen the transparency and credibility of the system and respect for its independence, such as the future webcasting of public meetings and the use of videoconferencing by delegations as an additional measure to facilitate greater participation — which aim, through national processes, to ensure the high moral and professional qualities of the committees' experts and strong condemnation of any reprisals against those who cooperate with the treaty bodies, and to recognize the usefulness of the Addis Ababa guidelines as measures for self-regulation — they all lead in the direction of the principles of cooperation and genuine dialogue that should govern the relationship between States and the committees, both of which have an interest in the promotion and protection of human rights.

The group of like-minded Latin American countries understands that the approval of those decisions is in no way the end of the road. We firmly believe that the document adopted provides tools to help the committees and States to better comply with their obligations. We are aware that much remains to be done to substantially increase the level of compliance with States' legal obligation to submit periodic reports, which must be reviewed on time, and then to help them to implement the recommendations. We also cannot ignore that the obligation to produce multiple reports and their various timelines increasingly represent a challenge for States, not only for small States. As a result, we believe that it would be good to have better coordination of the system in general to ensure greater predictability of the reporting cycles, organizing the process as a whole, as indicated in the resolution, which should also lead to greater efficiency in the use of resources.

In conclusion, we want to reiterate our commitment to the broad dissemination of the contents of the resolution and ask that it be disseminated by all other stakeholders, so that its content may be sufficiently known, understood and internalized in the various sectors of our societies that are involved in the submission of periodic reports to the committees. We firmly believe that this will lead to our fundamental objective, which is an effective improvement on the ground of the enjoyment of human rights by the millions of men, women, girls and boys who are ultimately deserving of the multilateral system to promote and protect their human rights and of our efforts.

The President: We have heard the last speaker in explanation of vote.

The Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 125.

I give the floor to the delegation of Mexico.

Mrs. Colín Ortega (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): At the outset, the delegation of Mexico would like to associate itself with the statement made by the representative of Chile on behalf of the group of like-minded Latin American countries. I would like to thank the Bureau of the Fifth Committee of the General Assembly, as well as the Secretariat and coordinators who assisted us during this first resumed session, for their work and commitment. I also appreciate the fact that the Secretary-General was present at this meeting.

The issues discussed at the first resumed session of the Fifth Committee made it possible to make progress on aspects which are particularly important for my delegation. Accountability is one of the central pillars of effective and efficient management, which requires the Secretariat's attention and commitment. The promotion of a culture of accountability, which is based on results-based management and the management of institutional risks, will lead to a solid and transparent Organization.

The conclusion of the capital master plan, which will make it possible to host the next session of the General Assembly in the remodelled building, should provide us with a number of lessons learned, which, as a preventive measure, can be shared with similar initiatives for the purpose avoiding increases in the costs of construction programmes in the United Nations system.

For its part, the approval of a full-time post for the representative of the Secretary-General in the investment area of the Pension Fund will make it possible to strengthen that important area to support those who have worked with dedication to this Organization in their retirement.

My delegation would also like to refer to the initiative on the mobility of the Organization's staff. Resolution 68/265, which was adopted today, indicates the willingness of Member States to support the Secretary-General, but states that the General Assembly needs to have information that can be provided only when the International Public Sector Accounting Standards and the Umoja platform are up and running throughout the United Nations system. Mexico wishes to recognize the representatives who made it possible to achieve a balanced agreement on that area, which is so relevant to our Organization.

With the adoption of the revised of managed mobility framework, United Nations officials and staff will have a suitable framework for the Secretary-General to develop a dynamic and flexible work force that is capable of meeting the global challenges of the twenty-first century, and for the staff to be trained and to develop themselves professionally to better contribute to the purposes and principles of our Organization. Mexico understands that the United Nations mobility policy will be aimed at adequately addressing all issues related to the professional lives of its employees.

My delegation sincerely hopes that the matters deferred to the second resumed session and to the sixty-ninth session of the General Assembly will be presented by the Secretariat with the items requested by Member States during the deliberations of the Fifth Committee during the main session and the first resumed session in order to be able to decisively approve them to facilitate the compliance with the mandates agreed by the principal organs of the United Nations.

Finally, we wish to highlight your leadership, Mr. President, which was essential in moving the agreements in the Committee forward, which will make it possible for our Organization to efficiently and effectively address the challenges we face in today's world.

The President: Before concluding, let me quickly acknowledge the hard work and dedication of the Chair of the Fifth Committee and his bureau and the Secretariat, which supported the work of the Committee.

The meeting rose at 4.25 p.m.